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JOINT INSPECTION UNI

Note by the Secretary-Genera

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of th General Assembly the comments of the Secretary-General and of the Administrativ Committee on Coordination on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Evaluation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF): Towards a More Operational Approach?" (A/50/885, annex).

ANNEX

Comments of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Administrative Committee on Coordination on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Evaluation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF)"

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of the report prepared by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) at the request of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) was to evaluate as comprehensively as possible the progress in the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, launched by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/151 of 18 December 1991. In that resolution, endorsing and adopting the New Agenda, the General Assembly predicated the implementation of the commitments contained in the New Agenda upon the partnership involving African Member States, on the one hand, and the international community, especially organizations and agencies of the United Nations system, on the other.

2. Given the fact that the New Agenda places primary responsibility for its implementation on African Member States themselves, the Inspectors in their evaluation considered the activities of the United Nations system in the implementation of the New Agenda exclusively as supportive in nature. Therefore, they focused their attention on the review of the development priorities and initiatives being pursued by African Governments, individually and collectively, and then on the evaluation of the adequacy of the support provided by the international community, in general, and the United Nations system, in particular.

3. Based on the information received by the authors of the study during their contacts at United Nations Headquarters, as well as on the analysis of replies to questionnaires provided by African Governments, resident coordinators and th headquarters of organizations, agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, the Inspectors came to the conclusion that, although a great deal of progress has been registered in the areas of democratic and macroeconomic reforms in an increasing number of countries of the region, a lot of challenges remain to be tackled, including maximizing the role of women in development, transforming the commodity sector into an engine of economic growth and development, revitalizing the quality of education and health care systems and strengthening the efficiency of public administration, etc. The authors recognize that, at the level of the international community, the questions of the development of Africa featured prominently on the agendas of major international forums such as the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development, the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development, the Beijing World Conference on Women, the Tokyo International Conference on African Development and others.

4. With regard to the activities within the United Nations system as a whole, the Inspectors conclude that, independently of the New Agenda, virtually all the

agencies and organizations of the system have, since the mid-1980s, assigned priority to the African region, particularly in terms of the growing proportion of resources allocated for technical cooperation activities and humanitarian operations. At the same time, the authors stress the general lack of awareness of the existence of the New Agenda among the system's field personnel in African countries who theoretically are supposed to be at the edge of its implementation. The system-wide plan of action incorporating the priorities of the New Agenda is still to be given operational expression in field activities and resource mobilization efforts.

5. The Inspectors make a number of recommendations aimed at raising awareness and concern among the international community, organizations and agencies of the United Nations system and the Governments of African States as to the need for urgent effective practical actions at the global, regional, subregional and national levels in the implementation of the New Agenda. The set of recommendations addressed specifically to the United Nations, as well as to the United Nations system as a whole, include proposals related to promoting the New Agenda by the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), in general, and by each organization, in particular; reducing the cost of technical cooperation with African countries; strengthening inter-agency cooperation and coordinatio at the country, regional, subregional and global levels; reinforcing the institutional capacity-building objectives of technical cooperation activitie in Africa; the development organizations' support for subregional integration; strengthening the role of women in development; introduction of new objectives for Programme 45 a/ in the next medium-term plan; reorganizing the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) with a focus on macroeconomic reforms, investment promotion, debt relief and export diversification; strengthening public administration; and support for conflict prevention and management, etc.

II. GENERAL COMMENTS

6. The Secretary-General and the organizations of the United Nations system find the report to be a very interesting, useful and timely study which presents a good overview of Africa's extremely important development problems. It charts progress towards resolving them and makes some perceptive suggestions, in particular, to the international community concerning the future strategies for dealing with challenges faced by the countries of the region. The timing of the report is appreciated since it coincides with, and can contribute to, the mid-term review of the New Agenda in September 1996, at which key substantive issues affecting the implementation of the New Agenda will be raised and new concrete measures to accelerate the pace of the implementation of the New Agenda in the forthcoming period will be proposed.

7. The Secretary-General and the members of ACC recognize the difficulty of the task assigned to the Inspectors on undertaking the evaluation of the New Agenda, which constitutes a political compact between African countries and their development partners and with few quantifiable targets to measure the achievements made. This task was complicated by the fact that the New Agenda, as correctly pointed out in the document, is one of many regional development initiatives adopted in different forums within and outside the continent. Thus, there are a number of programmes for Africa coexisting on different levels and

different scales, so that it becomes difficult to disaggregate which policies and actions pursued by the various partners are in response to the particular programmes. In addition, since African Member States have the primary responsibility for the implementation of the New Agenda, it is difficult to evaluate independently and exclusively the impact of the New Agenda thus far.

8. It should also be mentioned that the evaluation of the New Agenda was undertaken against the background of severe resource constraints facing the United Nations system as a whole. In addition to this, resources flowing into Africa from multilateral and bilateral sources, including official development assistance, have also declined. Accordingly, the scope for implementing the New Agenda has been rather limited, from the standpoints of both the technical cooperation resources of the United Nations system organizations and other multilateral financial institutions and the resources for counterpart obligations for African Governments. Having agreed with the Inspectors' assessment of the resource crisis faced by African countries, some agencies expressed their belief that the ratio of resources allocated for peace-keeping and humanitarian assistance to that for development (4:1 in 1994), should be reversed if substantial progress was to be made on the economic front in the region.

9. Some organizations note with regret that while such development priorities as the environment, the democratization process and South-South cooperation are more or less fully reflected in the report, others, very important ones, have not been mentioned by the authors. While recognizing that the report provides a good analysis of the implementation of the New Agenda since its launching by the General Assembly in 1991, they would have liked to have seen in the report a more balanced view of the contributions of various organizations, agencies, programmes and funds of the United Nations system to the economic and social development of Africa during the present period of time. It would also have been useful if the authors had further addressed the issues of the deteriorating economic situation in the lively important areas related to the production and availability of basic needs for the society, such as food and water, and if they had proposed necessary remedial actions to address these issues.

10. In the view of the Secretary-General and the members of ACC, the JIU report has made an interesting and useful contribution to the debate within the United Nations system on the issues of the development of the African continent. However, the study still contains some shortcomings, as well as poorly substantiated assumptions and judgements which, to some extent, diminish the value of its analysis and recommendations.

11. Thus, a number of questions have not been addressed by the authors of the study. The most urgent one is related to the launching of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa. Since the report does not sufficiently take into account the linkage between the New Agenda and the Special Initiative, the positive impact that the effective implementation of the programme components of the Special Initiative would have on advancing the goals of the New Agenda are not properly assessed. The relationship between the Special Initiative, the New Agenda and the System-wide Plan of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development has been clearly established. The Special Initiative complements the New Agenda, gives it new impetus and is its

operational wing. The Special Initiative is a vehicle for implementing the Plan of Action, galvanizing the organizations of the United Nations system for vigorous and coordinated action with tangible results in Africa. It is also a means to mobilize political commitment and support both among Africa's development partners and within Africa.

12. The methodology applied in the report for the evaluation seems to be based on whether or not the actions of the Governments and organizations of the United Nations system are in reference to the priorities contained in the framework of the New Agenda, rather than on the analyses of actual achievements made on the priorities established in the New Agenda itself. This approach inevitably leads to unclear linkages between the recommendations and the analysis. For instance, the report concludes that although there is a lack of awareness of the New Agenda on the part of government officials, there is consistency in the priority objectives listed in the New Agenda and the actions taken by African countries. Clearly, the Inspectors seem to have focused their evaluation on the degree to which priorities of African countries and the United Nations system coincide. The report, therefore, does not adequately assess the impact of the United Nations activities according to the priorities set in the New Agenda. Neither does it contain recommendations based on the Inspectors' findings on how to improve the priorities and framework of the New Agenda in order to increase the effectiveness of the support of the United Nations system to the efforts of African Governments. However, in the analysis of the United Nations system, the Inspectors seem to have applied a different approach, evaluating in detail specific United Nations programmes in the context of the goals of the New Agenda. These two differing methodological approaches have tended to divert attention from the main objective of the evaluation entrusted to the Inspectors.

13. The Secretary-General and the members of ACC cannot agree with the Inspectors' conclusion that the institutional mechanisms put in place to support the implementation of the Agenda have been ineffective. Such a conclusion seems to be based either on a misinterpretation or a lack of understanding of the mandates of the three units and of the nature of Programme 45 which incorporates the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries, the African Recovery Unit and the Inter-Agency Task Force. In this regard, it should be recalled that Programme 45 was created by the General Assembly, through CPC, to respond to the critical economic and social situation facing Africa by sensitizing and mobilizing the international community to support African efforts. Each of the constitutive elements has its own specific task: the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries deals with policy aspects, coordination, substantive servicing and advocacy; the mandate of the African Recovery Unit is to raise international awareness of the economic crisis in Africa through its publication of Africa recovery and other publications, and the Inter-Agency Task Force, as a technical arm, is assigned to monitor the implementation of the programme in the field at the national level. None of the organizational units of the programme has been mandated or allocated the necessary resources for financing or implementation of projects at the field level, including raising awareness of the New Agenda within the United Nations system or in Africa itself. This is the task of each organization participating in the Inter-Agency Task Force and of African ministers involved in the global political processes on the New Agenda.

14. While the report contains to some degree elements of the progress made to date in the implementation of specific priority areas of the New Agenda, the analysis is limited to the actual actions taken at the field level. The global or intergovernmental consensus-building achieved through such instruments as th Tokyo Declaration adopted at the Tokyo International Conference on African Development in 1993, and the Bandung Framework for Asia-Africa Cooperation adopted at the Asia-Africa Forum in 1994, is a direct outcome of the New Agenda. The activities under these instruments should be credited to the New Agenda, since they serve to identify the principles and advance the priority issues. The achievements that are attributable to these instruments could also have been evaluated as direct consequences of the New Agenda. Similarly, the Secretary-General would like to mention inadequate evaluation in the report of the progress made by organizations and entities whose operational activities largely take place in Africa, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Department for Development Support and Management Services (DDSMS), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), ECA and the World Food Programme (WFP). The Inspectors have reviewed two critical organizations, namely, UNDP and ECA, but only in terms of restructuring and the delivery of technical cooperation rather than evaluating their contribution to the implementation of the New Agenda. Regarding the activities of other above-mentioned units, the report tends to be purely descriptive rather than analytical.

15. Several organizations and agencies expressed their concern that their preliminary views on the draft JIU report, as well as their overall activities and positive experience in the area of the study, either did not find proper reflection, or were not included in the report, despite the fact that the appropriate information had been provided to the Inspectors at the initial stage of the preparation of the study.

16. The Secretary-General and the members of ACC support in principle the conclusions and recommendations of the Inspectors and consider them generally fair and constructive. They appreciate the understanding of the Inspectors that the present arrangements fall short of the ideal and that, in fact, a drastic rearrangement might be highly desirable. At the same time, they stress that some recommendations are beyond the capabilities of the United Nations system, particularly under current resource constraints, and are not implementable, as the United Nations system is bound to the mandates and resources decided upon by the General Assembly and relevant governing bodies. In this regard, the need for coordination among United Nations organizations and entities, as well as Member States, cannot be overemphasized.

III. COMMENTS ON RECOMMENDATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

Recommendation 1. Promoting the New Agenda

(a) The New Agenda should be used by the organizations as an incentive framework for developing new individual or joint operational and resource mobilization initiatives for Africa, and each organization should report annually to its governing body on the results of such initiatives;

(b) ACC should also report annually to the Economic and Social Council on progress and constraints related to the implementation of the System-wide Plan of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, as well as other relevant international initiatives and commitments, and should submit recommendations thereon for action by the Council and system organizations.

17. The Secretary-General and organizations of the United Nations system had no difficulties to support the proposals contained in the recommendation as well as relative observations in the text which led the Inspectors to the adoption of this recommendation. They are fully aware of the role prescribed for organizations and agencies to play in the implementation of the New Agenda. They point out that most of their activities on the African continent are fully in line with the priority issues of the New Agenda, and that their governing bodies have taken appropriate steps to integrate those priorities in their respective programmes. In view of some agencies, the United Nations system should also be encouraged to support the initiatives already taken by the African Governments and institutions and to help ensure their implementation. Some members of ACC indicate that since the specialized agencies of the system are typically concerned with some specific sectoral aspects covered in the New Agenda, it would be preferable for them to pursue an approach to African development in implementing the New Agenda that is relevant to their specific concerns.

18. With regard to the proposal contained in subparagraph (b) of recommendation 1, ACC believes that the reporting of the Committee to the Economic and Social Council on the implementation of the System-wide Plan of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development and other initiatives and commitments would be included in the context of its annual overview report as well as other reports on the activities of the system relating to African economic recovery and development.

Recommendation 2. Reducing the cost of technical cooperation with Africa

(a) The organizations should continue to reduce, where applicable, their reliance on resident experts in technical cooperation projects in favour of expanded use of national or regional human resources and institutions, more direct training and fellowship programmes, short-term consultancies, volunteers, technical cooperation among developing countries,

South-South and North-South institutional twinning, collaboration with local and foreign non-governmental organizations, and periodic visits by the organizations' regular staff to ensure conformity with norms, standards and policies of the system. These alternative modalities of technical cooperation could be further retooled and used more extensively by the organizations;

(b) The organizations should keep under continuous review their technical cooperation staff costs, particularly at headquarters, and should endeavour to limit such costs to the basic minimum in order to release adequate resources for the wider application of the technical cooperation modalities proposed under (a) above;

(c) Subject to the wishes of host Governments, the organizations should continue to expand the application of the policy of national execution of projects as a means to national institution-building and strengthening. The organizations should focus more on national policies and programmes, and should seek to promote the application of the norms and standards endorsed by African Member States at the global and regional levels;

(d) The organizations should further reduce their infrastructural and overhead costs of technical cooperation in Africa, taking into account, among other things, the recommendations contained in the JIU report entitled "United Nations system common premises and services in the field" (JIU/REP/94/8). Priority consideration should be given to unified procurement and management of goods and services, especially transport equipment, at country level.

19. The organizations and agencies are in full agreement with the thrust of the recommendation, which covers the issues of great importance and concern for most organizations, programmes and funds carrying out their technical cooperation activities in developing countries, in general, and in the African region, in particular. They also mention that the provisions of the recommendation refer to concepts already adopted by the United Nations system, and most of the measures advocated are already actively pursued by the system. Thus, technical resources of many development agencies have been relocated from the headquarters to the field structures, and the use of national consultants and specialists in the implementation of their technical cooperation projects has significantly increased. Furthermore, such projects have appropriate training components which enhance national capacity-building.

20. Some organizations see decentralizing development decisions and the management of development programmes and projects to the local level, under the national system of programme and budget performance monitoring, evaluation and accountability, as a great potential for poverty alleviation, project sustainability and resource mobilization. They also believe that, for that approach to work, it will be essential to develop the required institutional

capacity at the local government level and put in place effective safeguards to ensure accountability in the relationship between the civil services and local government structures.

21. There is also a feeling among some agencies that the question of reducing the reliance on resident experts in technical cooperation projects should be considered only on a case-by-case basis and for the good of the Member States. Since in many instances the necessary managerial capacities are not available, the United Nations system organizations should give priority to the strengthening of the central, sectoral and district level capacities to integrate and manage existing development programmes within the national priority investment programme. In turn, this will require a massive training programme which should be considered also as an essential component of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa.

22. It has also been mentioned that, while efforts at cost containment are always important, the vast requirements of the region has to be eventually matched by adequate resources, including through the multilateral channels. For one organization, the recommendation appears to be unrelated to the major thrust of the Inspectors' observations and goes into too much detail which, it believes, should be left to country-level negotiations between Governments and representatives of the United Nations system organizations.

Recommendation 3. Policy advocacy and awareness campaign at the field level

(a) The organizations should be much more actively engaged in development policy advice at the governmental level of African countries in close collaboration and coordination with the multilateral financial institutions, and should intensify popular awareness campaigns on their respective normative instruments, development policies, strategies and programmes of action through maximum use of public and private mass media (television and radio networks, public lectures, printed media, video and audio cassettes, or information technologies, such as CD-ROM);

(b) The organizations should consider establishing in each United Nations information centre in Africa (or in each African country) a United Nations system joint information service responsible for:

(i) Planning and implementing popular awareness campaigns as proposed above;

(ii) Publishing a monthly newsletter covering United Nations system events at all levels, and promoting United Nations norms, standards, resolutions and programmes in all sectors covered by the system in the field;

(c) The joint information services should be linked to the information services of ECA, the Department of Public Information and of all individual organizations of the

system, including the multilateral financial institutions, in order to promote a regular two-way flow of development information between the field and global levels of the system.

23. The Secretary-General and the members of ACC welcome the proposals contained in recommendation 3, especially the part related to the establishment in each African country of a United Nations system joint information service linked to the information services of ECA, the Department of Public Information and all the organizations of the system, so as to facilitate a regular two-way information flow between the field and the global levels of the system. However, some agencies give their support to the recommendation with the condition that it should not involve additional costs for public information activities, but be made possible through a more efficient use of available resources and should also take into account the capacity of the United Nations information centres to host joint operations of the magnitude suggested by the Inspectors. In this context, they see the proposals in subparagraphs (b) and (c) as promoting an unfocused and costly intervention, which the United Nations system might not be able to support in the current financial situation. They suggest therefore that the cost implications of the recommendation need to be carefully assessed through appropriate inter-agency mechanisms.

Recommendation 4. Institutional capacity-building

(a) All organizations should reinforce the institutional capacity-building objective of their technical cooperation activities in Africa so that each activity, project or programme aims explicitly at strengthening the managerial, administrative and financial accounting systems of the supported institution, including its performance monitoring and self-evaluation processes;

(b) Where applicable, the organizations should consider the feasibility of promoting, in their respective sectors and for the support of bilateral donors and multilateral financial institutions, two types of umbrella projects in African countries:

(i) An umbrella project designed to establish a comprehensive inventory, to be updated annually, of national and subregional consulting institutions in the public and private sectors with a view to strengthening and using them as implementing agencies for the system's technical cooperation activities;

(ii) An umbrella project designed to strengthen the logistic, technical and operational capabilities of grass-roots cooperatives, especially in the food projection and food processing sector.

24. The Secretary-General and the members of ACC fully agree with the proposals concerning institutional capacity-building which, as they strongly believe, is

an extremely important responsibility of the United Nations system, in which all organizations and agencies are already directly or indirectly engaged. The participation of national and subregional human resources and institutions in the execution of technical cooperation projects has been widely encouraged, and this modality is already in place for almost all development organizations of the system. With regard to the specific proposals contained under subparagraph (b), some doubts have been expressed on the general validity and applicability of those proposals since they require considerable additional financial resources.

Recommendation 5. Inter-agency cooperation and coordination

(a) Country-level: Under the authority and guidance of host Governments, the system organizations should intensify their cooperation and coordination with the Bretton Woods institutions and to that end should enable Governments to adopt a single-country programming mechanism that could also be used for coordination with bilateral donors in supporting long-term national development strategies on a consistent basis;

(b) UNDP and ECA should play a more vigorous role in assisting African countries in the preparation of national long-term perspective studies and development plans that include strong subregional integrative dimensions and commitments at the global level, and serve as the master plan for all other country programming exercises;

(c) Regional level: In order to reduce the financial costs and duplicative nature of existing ECA and Organization of African Unity (OAU) consultative meetings with the United Nations system organizations and donor community, the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his capacity as chairman of ACC, and the Secretary-General of OAU, in consultation with African Member States, should jointly propose the establishment of an African development conference that would expand the membership and authority of the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa, and have system-wide scope. The Inter-Agency Task Force on African development and the OAU/ECA/African Development Bank (ADB) intersecretariat unit could initiate the draft terms of reference of the proposed Conference for review at ACC level, and submission for appropriate action to the relevant intergovernmental bodies;

(d) Global level: In the context of the new ACC initiative on Africa, consideration should be given to the setting up of a standing inter-agency working group on the commodity sector composed of ECA, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Trade Centre (ITC), UNCTAD, UNDP, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the World Trade Organization (WTO), and

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other relevant organizations, such as the World Bank and the Common Fund for Commodities, charged with:

(i) Developing and promoting a comprehensive view of Africa's commodity sector development issues, as analysed in paragraphs 93 to 107 of this report, and proposing practical actions to be taken by African countries, central intergovernmental bodies, especially the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and by Africa's principal trading partners;

(ii) Generating technical, action-oriented proposals for increasing and structuring cooperation between exporting and importing countries for commodities not yet covered by international agreements, especially in the area of fresh fruit and vegetable, and for strengthening existing commodity agreements;

(iii) Providing technical advice on commodity issues to African countries and LDCs generally, especially in the context of future reviews of the implementation of the Uruguay Round agreements, and promoting actions to secure further reduction of tariff and non-tariff barriers, improved market transparency, pricing mechanisms, and other enabling measures likely to increase the commodity export earnings and diversification dividends of African countries on a sustained basis.

25. While there is an overall understanding among organizations and agencies of the importance of strengthening the inter-agency cooperation and coordination for the purpose of the implementation of the New Agenda, there is no agreement on separate proposals contained in recommendation 5.

26. Thus, for instance, some agencies mention that the idea of a single-country programming mechanism is a good one and that efforts have been made repeatedly to achieve progress in this direction. Similarly, they believe that the proposal concerning the establishment of an African development conference which would group ECA and OAU, though having some merit, may not be politically feasible. On the other hand, the view has also been expressed that the idea of establishing such a conference would be economical, since that forum is expected to replace the various costly ministerial meetings and conferences convened by ECA and OAU, and will facilitate the participation of agencies that have no country offices in Africa.

27. The Secretary-General believes that it is the prerogative of African Governments themselves to propose the establishment of such a mechanism, if they feel it necessary, and for the appropriate regional and United Nations organs to respond to such a proposal. Therefore, he feels that it would not be appropriate for the Inter-Agency Task Force on African development and other secretariats to initiate the suggested process, and furthermore, it is doubtful that the Economic and Social Council can be the model to be emulated. It is to

be noted in this connection that before taking any steps on the establishment of a proposed conference, one needs to be convinced that coordination between African countries, on the one hand, and the United Nations system and donor community, on the other, would be vastly improved as a result, that costs and duplication would be greatly minimized and that follow-up would be maximized.

28. Organizations and agencies of the United Nations system support the proposal of establishing a standing inter-agency working group on the commodity sector and agree with the definition of its broad terms of reference. It should be recalled that, recognizing the critical importance of the diversification of African commodities, the Secretary-General submitted his reports, with concrete proposals to the General Assembly during the last three years, as well as the recommendation to establish the above-mentioned inter-agency working group to provide technical backstopping for a diversification facility which was proposed to be established within the African Development Bank. The issue is to be considered by the Member States during the mid-term review of the New Agenda at the fifty-first session of the General Assembly.

29. There is also a view that for the purpose of improving inter-agency coordination, a mechanism should be established within each organization of the United Nations system that could be linked to the Inter-Agency Task Force and translate an agency's recommendations into concrete programmes and projects. But this idea has to be thoroughly studied and discussed by organizations themselves.

30. As far as the recommendation on national long-term perspective studies and development plans is concerned, there are views that this idea should be tested against the lessons of experience from what has been achieved thus far.

31. With regard to the call on organizations of the system to intensify their cooperation and coordination with the Bretton Woods institutions, it is supported in principle. However, there is a feeling that a move by the organizations alone in this direction may not lead to the establishment of the suggested single-country programming mechanism. Moreover, one agency recalls that this issue has been discussed in the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions and other inter-agency forums. It is proposed that this recommendation be particularly addressed to the various United Nations funding entities, which use different programming frameworks or country programmes.

Recommendation 6. Support for subregional integration

In view of the decisive importance that African Member States now assign to the subregional economic groupings they have established to accelerate implementation of the Abuja Treaty instituting the African Economic Community, the development organizations concerned should accordingly reorganize their country and intercountry priorities and activities around subregional development poles, as follows:

(a) Each organization should consider providing, in its sphere of competence, direct technical support to the

secretariats of the subregional organizations in order to strengthen their institutional and technological capacities;

(b) All country programming mechanisms (especially long-term perspective studies and plans, country strategy notes and policy framework papers) as well as sectoral programme and project strategies, should maximize subregional integrated approaches to similar development problems;

(c) ECA and its multinational programming and operational centres (MULPOCs) and, whenever feasible, the secretariat of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Africa, should participate in country programming exercises offering opportunities for intercountry initiatives;

(d) Each organization should, to the extent possible:

(i) Establish and support on a continuing basis a subregional or country-group twinning network of similar country institutions (public and private) in order to strengthen technical collaboration among them and promote exchange of personnel and rational use of resources within each subregion;

(ii) Collaborate more intensely with ECA MULPOCs in the different subregions;

(e) Organizations with country offices in Africa, but without subregional offices, should take the necessary action to ensure that:

(i) One country office in each subregion or group of countries (e.g., Sahel (Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS)), Horn of Africa (Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD)), East Africa (East African Community (EAC)), southern Africa (Southern African Development Community (SADC)), etc.) is designated and appropriately equipped to serve as a subregional office or focal point responsible for programming and managing subregional intercountry activities; operational management responsibility for such activities should accordingly be decentralized from headquarters to the field level. Offices thus designated by the organizations should be located in the same city together with ECA MULPOCs, whenever possible;

(ii) All country offices in Africa develop a strong subregional or country-group focus, especially in country programming exercises; the allocation of country resources should be optimally rationalized on a subregional or country-group basis in order to maximize

intercountry approaches to the solution of common development problems in a more cost-effective manner;

(f) In order to reinforce further the harmonization and rationalization of the organizations' country activities within each subregion, the Inter-Agency Task Force on African development, ECA and UNDP should institute annual or biennial programme coordination meetings of United Nations system country representatives or resident coordinators in each subregion, chaired by the executive heads of the respective subregional economic communities and serviced by ECA and/or its MULPOCs;

(g) The organizations should replace their continental programmes for Africa or sub-Saharan Africa with subregional intercountry programmes covering the main economic communities of the region.

32. The Inspectors' proposal to help strengthen the institutional and technological capacities of the secretariats of subregional organizations has found strong support from the Secretary-General and the members of ACC, who consider regional and subregional integration to be very important, and even critical in view of the relatively small size of African economies, which depend on inter-linkages to assure their viability. The recommendation is in full accord with the policies of all the development organizations and agencies of the United Nations system. Nevertheless, some details of this recommendation containing valuable suggestions need to be further analysed and clarified. Thus, for instance, the proposal contained in subparagraph (e) is fully congruent with the ongoing decentralization process in most agencies. However, if it is implied that there should be as many subregional offices as the ECA MULPOCs, this may not be economically justifiable or desirable, since, for a subregional office to be effective, it would have to be equipped and staffed with a critical mass of expertise. Therefore, when it comes to the specific issues of country offices' coverage, decentralization and allocation of resources, some agencies take exception to the related elements of the recommendation, as the most appropriate ways and means to deal with those issues vary from organization to organization and are functions of a complex situation, bearing on financial, structural and technical aspects, which cannot be subjected to general prescriptions.

Recommendation 7. Women in development

In view of the major role played by women in the development of Africa, the organizations of the United Nations system should give priority consideration to the implementation of the recommendations contained in the African Platform for Action adopted by the Fifth African Regional Conference on Women in Dakar in November 1994, and briefly outlined in paragraph 67 of this report.

33. The Secretary-General and the members of ACC endorse recommendation 7 and point out that its provisions related to the integration of women in the

development process are being fully taken into account by organizations and agencies in the implementation of economic and social programmes and projects in the countries of the African continent.

IV. COMMENTS ON RECOMMENDATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Recommendation 8. Strengthening implementation of the New Agenda in Africa

(a) In order to rectify the serious weaknesses observed by the Inspectors in existing institutional arrangements for the New Agenda within the United Nations Secretariat, the Secretary-General should, in the context of his Special Initiative on Africa, propose to the General Assembly new objectives for Programme 45 in the next medium-term plan and programme budget so that the programme's resources are optimally utilized in direct support of African countries and in leveraging additional resource mobilization and other operational actions by the United Nations system organizations;

(b) The secretariat of the Economic Commission for Africa should be further restructured taking into account the Inspectors' recommended measures outlined in paragraph 151 of this report, and the need to strengthen complementarities in general and a division of labour in particular with other Secretariat entities (the Department for Development Support and Management Services, UNCTAD, UNEP, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)), as well as with the specialized agencies, especially FAO and UNIDO;

(c) The Department for Development Support and Management Services should play a more prominent role in supporting, at the request of Governments, civil service and judicial reforms in Africa, and in that context, should:

(i) Intensify support for the introduction of management technologies, especially automated management information systems, in African public administrations, as well as technical advice to Governments on decentralization of development management authority and resources to the district/community levels within a national system of programme and budget performance monitoring, evaluation and accountability;

(ii) Collaborate closely with the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme at the United Nations Office at Vienna, as well as with ECA in advising and assisting Governments of the region to strengthen national legislations and enforcement mechanisms for the prevention of all forms of crime

(corruption, illicit capital flight, urban crime and insecurity, drug traffic and abuse, etc.) as an integral part of judicial, civil service and economic reforms in African countries;

(iii) To the above ends, promote together with ECA and the crime prevention programme periodic subregional ministerial meetings aimed at developing common programmes and weapons to prevent and combat crime in all forms.

34. The Secretary-General is taking this recommendation with great interest and concern, at the same time, since it touches upon very serious issues related to the effectiveness and efficiency of institutional arrangements currently in place to support the implementation of the New Agenda with a minimum of available resources. As it has been mentioned in paragraph 13 above, Programme 45 was conceived, designed and adopted by the General Assembly, through CPC, to respond to the critical economic and social situation facing Africa. The original programme was revised in 1992 to integrate various elements of the New Agenda. The Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries was specifically created in 1992, in response to a proposal of CPC and the General Assembly to establish at the United Nations Headquarters a "separate and identifiable unit" on Africa in order to mobilize, support and galvanize efforts in the global political processes for African economic recovery and development, and to play a catalytic role in encouraging the international community to focus its development cooperation on critical and emerging issues of African development. Mobilization of resources through these tasks, therefore, goes beyond development assistance or official development assistance flows to Africa. These tasks should stimulate the efforts of the international community to promote domestic capital formation and investment in Africa, and eventually to increase overall net financial resource flows to the African continent.

35. The facilitation of the global consensus-building for Africa and policy coordination among Member States, civil society and international organizations including the Bretton Woods institutions, is an important element of the mandate of the subprogramme 1 of Programme 45. This challenging task is considered to be critical for central decision-making at the United Nations Headquarters with the view to supporting the efforts being made at the regional, subregional and country levels. Similarly, subprogramme 3 of Programme 45 was mandated to raise international awareness of the African development problems at the global level using existing international media network at the United Nations Headquarters, particularly through the publication of Africa recovery and issuance of press releases. The Secretary-General believes that the present arrangement to a great extent benefits from linking African issues with other United Nations information and publicity activities with a minimum of available resources, while the proposed decentralization of this function by assigning these tasks to the United Nations system country teams could involve a substantial amount of resources. With regard to subprogramme 2, it is recognized that the Inter-Agency Task Force should continue to serve as a technical arm for monitoring at the field level and reporting on the implementation of the New Agenda and the Special Initiative on Africa, and that its coordination functions

at the regional level should be strengthened. It is also expected that, within the ongoing restructuring of ECA, the Task Force would be further strengthened through the redeployment of resources assigned for the implementation of all the existing special programmes in the African region (least developed countries, decades, the New Agenda, the Special Initiative, etc.).

36. During the debates in the Fifth Committee and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on United Nations priorities and programme budgets for the biennia 1992-1993, 1994-1995 and 1996-1997, Member States clearly indicated their strong support for the relevance of Programme 45 and even insisted upon the need to strengthen it as a matter of priority, through provision of necessary resources. The Governments furthermore requested for the establishment of a separate budget section for the programme in order to ensure full support and adequate level of resource allocation. It should be noted that in fact the programme did receive additional budget allocation by 20 per cent over the existing programme budget in 1995. The increase in percentage for Programme 45 under the programme budget for 1996-1997 was the second highest. In the light of the above, the Secretary-General considers the present institutional arrangements for Programme 45 as the most effective ones. But he also shares the views of Member States regarding further efforts to ensure adequate resource allocation for the challenging tasks assigned to the Programme.

37. The proposals contained in subparagraphs (b) and (c) of recommendation 8 are fully supported by the Secretary-General and the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system concerned.

Recommendation 9. Support for conflict prevention and management

(a) In line with the recommendations contained in another JIU report entitled "Sharing responsibilities for peace-keeping: the United Nations and regional organizations" (JIU/REP/95/4), the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Director-General of UNESCO should take all necessary measures to promote support by the international community for the OAU African Peace Fund and for the Pan-African Institute for Peace and Democracy recommended under 10 (b);

(b) The Secretary-General should also consider relocating the United Nations Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa closer to OAU headquarters to form the core contribution of the United Nations to the Pan-African Institute for Peace and Democracy, and thereby strengthen institutional cooperation in this area between the United Nations and OAU.

38. The Secretary-General is in full agreement with the Inspectors on the need to support the effort for conflict prevention and management in Africa and elsewhere. As stated in both "An Agenda for Peace" and "An Agenda for Development", submitted to the General Assembly in 1992 and 1994 respectively, the Secretary-General highlighted the inter-linkage between peace and development since these are mutually reinforcing. In this regard it should be noted that the Secretary-General has already called for international support

for the OAU Peace Fund on many occasions, including at the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council in July 1995. He also supports the need to develop institutional structures and mechanisms to study the specific problems of conflicts on the African continent and to undertake efforts to design standards and strategies for conflict management. However, he notes that recommendations relating to the Pan-African Institute for Peace and Democracy are addressed to OAU.

Recommendations 10-14

39. The Secretary-General and the members of ACC take note of the proposals contained in recommendations 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14, which are addressed specifically to the Governments of the African countries, as well as to the intergovernmental bodies of the region.

Notes

a/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/47/6/Rev.1), vol. I, programme 45.